

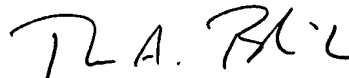
Accordingly, Unami is not properly prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

The rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is obviated by appropriate amendment. The claims have been amended to provide antecedent basis for the terms "ejecting pressure" and "dispersion fluid". In addition, the term "under not less than" has been deleted from the claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and early notification thereof is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Norman F. Oblon
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 24,618

Thomas A. Blinka, Ph.D.
Registration No. 44,541



22850

Tel.: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413-2220
NFO/TAB/cja
I:\atty\tab\212464US-am.doc

Marked-Up Copy
Serial No: 09/927,323
Amendment Filed on: HEREWITH

IN THE CLAIMS

--1. (Amended) A method of forming a powder compact[, which is characterized by] comprising:

[an application step of] applying a higher fatty acid lubricant to an inner surface of a heated die; and

[a compaction step of] filling metal powder into said die and compacting said metal powder under such a pressure that said higher fatty acid lubricant is chemically bonded with said metal powder to form a metallic soap coating.

2. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 1, wherein said higher fatty acid lubricant is a metal salt of a higher fatty acid.

3. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 2, wherein said metal salt of a higher fatty acid is a lithium salt, a calcium salt, or a zinc salt of a higher fatty acid.)

4. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 1, wherein said higher fatty acid lubricant is dispersed in water.

5. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 4, wherein said higher fatty acid lubricant is dispersed in water containing a surfactant.

6. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 5, wherein said higher fatty acid lubricant has [the] a maximum particle diameter of less than 30 μm .

7. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 1, wherein said heated die has a temperature of 100 °C or more.

8. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 7, wherein said heated die has a temperature below the melting point of said higher fatty acid lubricant.

9. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 1, wherein said metal powder has been heated.

10. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 1, wherein said metal powder [is metal powder containing] comprises iron powder.

11. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 1, wherein said metal powder [contains] further comprises said higher fatty acid lubricant.

12. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 10, wherein said metal powder [contains] further comprises said higher fatty acid lubricant.

13. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 11, wherein said metal powder [contains not less than] comprises 0.1% or more by weight of said higher fatty acid lubricant.

14. (Amended) A method of forming a powder compact[, which is characterized by] comprising:

[an application step of] applying a metal salt of higher fatty acid to an inner surface of a die heated to 100 °C or more; and

[a compaction step of] charging iron powder into said die and compacting said iron powder [under not less than] at a pressure of 600 MPa or more.

15. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 13, wherein said metal salt of a higher fatty acid is a lithium salt, a calcium salt or a zinc salt of a higher fatty acid.

16. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 13,
wherein said iron powder is compacted [under not less than] at a pressure of 785 MPa or more.

17. (Amended) A method of forming a powder compact,[which is characterized by]
comprising:

[an application step of] applying, to an inner surface of a die which has been heated to a
[predetermined] die temperature of 100°C or more, a dispersion fluid in which a metal salt of a
higher fatty acid having a higher melting point than said die temperature is finely dispersed, [so as
to form] thereby forming a coating of said metal salt of [said] a higher fatty acid;

[a compaction step of] filling iron powder into said die and compacting said iron powder
under a compacting pressure of [not less than] 600 MPa or more, thereby providing [so as to
obtain] a compact having a metallic soap coating on a surface which is in contact with said die;
and

[an ejecting step of] ejecting and taking out said compact from said die.

18. (Amended) A method of forming a powder compact[, which is characterized by]
comprising:

[an application step of] applying, to an inner surface of a die which has been heated to a
[predetermined] die temperature of 100°C or more, a dispersion fluid in which a metal salt of a
higher fatty acid having a higher melting point higher than said die temperature is finely
dispersed, [so as to form] thereby forming a coating of said metal salt of [said] a higher fatty acid;

[a compaction step of] filling iron powder into said die and compacting said iron powder
under a compacting pressure of [not less than] 600MPa or more, thereby providing [so as to
obtain] a compact having a metallic soap coating on a surface which is in contact with said die;
and

[an ejecting step of] ejecting and taking out said compact from said die [under] with an ejecting pressure of [not more than] 3% or less of said compacting pressure [of said compaction owing to lubricating characteristics of said metallic soap coating].

19. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 16, wherein said compacting pressure is [not less than] 686 MPa or more and said powder compact is removed from die with an ejecting pressure [is not more than] of 8 MPa or less.

20. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 16, wherein said compacting pressure is [not less than] 700 MPa or more and said ejecting pressure is [not more than] 15 MPa or less.

21. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 16, wherein said compacting pressure is [not less than] 700 MPa or more and said ejecting pressure is [not more than] 13 MPa or less.

22. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim 16, wherein said compacting pressure is [not less than] 700 MPa or more and said ejecting pressure is [not more than] 10 MPa or less.

23. (Amended) [A] The method of forming a powder compact [claimed in] of claim [16] 17, wherein said metal salt dispersed in said dispersion fluid has [the] a maximum particle diameter of 30 μm or less.--